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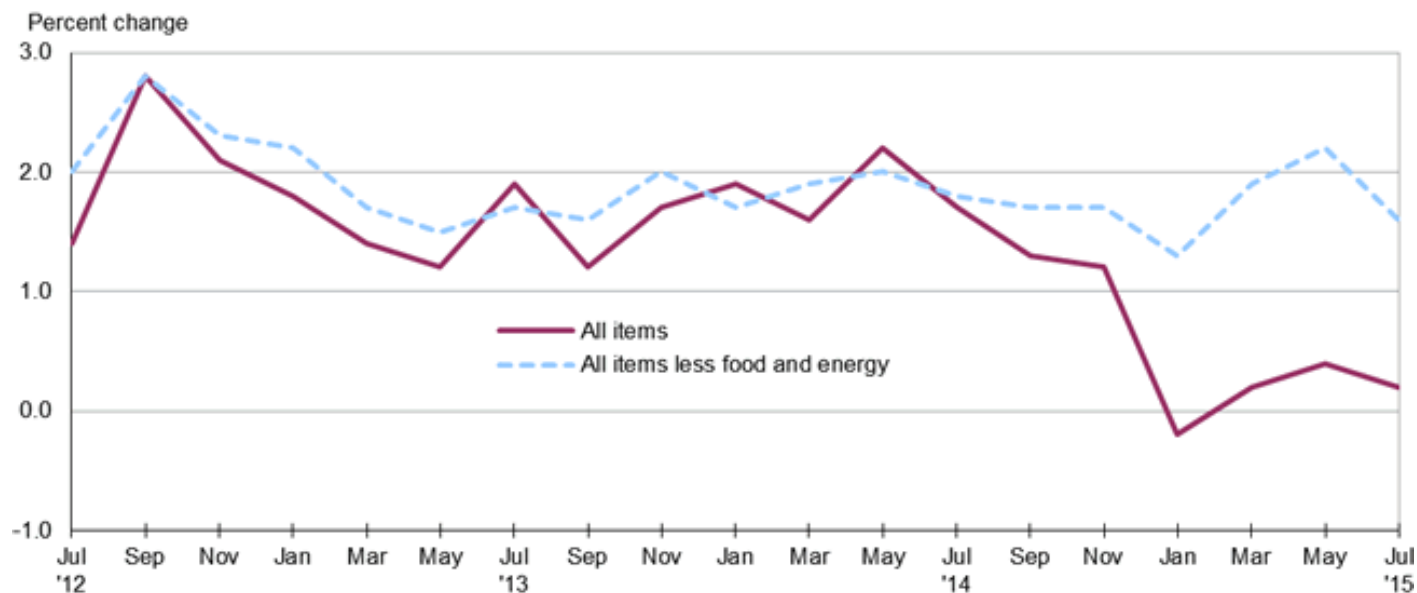
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Consumer Price Index, Washington-Baltimore – July 2015 **Area prices down 0.2 percent since May; up 0.2 percent over the year**

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Washington-Baltimore edged down 0.2 percent over the last two months, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted the decline was led by a 0.5-percent decrease in the all items less food and energy index. The food index also decreased 0.5 percent, while the energy index rose 4.2 percent since May. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, month-to-month changes may reflect the impact of seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U edged up 0.2 percent, due almost entirely to a 1.6-percent rise in the all items less food and energy index. (See [chart 1](#) and [table A](#).) Since July 2014, the food index rose 0.5 percent, while the energy index dropped 14.4 percent. (See [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Washington, D.C., July 2012–July 2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

After increasing 0.4 percent in May, the food index decreased 0.5 percent over the last two months. Prices for food at home declined 0.9 percent as prices were lower for various items including other fresh fruits and ham. Prices for food away from home inched up 0.1 percent.

Food prices rose 0.5 percent over the year due to higher prices for food away from home (2.3 percent). Conversely, prices for food at home declined 1.0 percent since last July.

Energy

The energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, rose 4.2 percent since May, led by a 9.2-percent increase in electricity prices. Gasoline prices also increased over the last two months, up 4.3 percent, while utility (piped) gas service prices were lower, down 11.6 percent.

Energy prices fell 14.4 percent over the year, led by a 24.1-percent drop in gasoline prices. Utility (piped) gas service prices also declined since July 2014, down 15.6 percent, while electricity prices rose 2.9 percent.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy decreased 0.5 percent since May. The decline was led by a larger-than-usual seasonal decrease in apparel prices, down 10.7 percent—the index’s largest two-month decline since its inception in 1996. Moderating the decline in the all items less food and energy index were higher prices for shelter (0.5 percent) and education and communication (0.8 percent) over the last two months.

Since July 2014, the index for all items less food and energy rose 1.6 percent. The increase was due largely to an over-the-year rise in shelter prices (3.2 percent), as the owners’ equivalent rent of residences index was up 3.4 percent. Lower prices for apparel (-6.9 percent) moderated the increase in the all items less food and energy index since last July.

Table A. Washington, D.C. CPI-U 2-month and 12-month percent changes, all items index, not seasonally adjusted

Month	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month
January.....	1.0	2.3	0.4	2.7	0.1	1.8	0.4	1.9	-1.0	-0.2
March.....	1.2	3.0	1.3	2.8	0.9	1.4	0.6	1.6	1.0	0.2
May.....	1.0	3.9	0.1	1.8	-0.2	1.2	0.4	2.2	0.6	0.4
July.....	0.1	4.1	-0.2	1.4	0.5	1.9	0.0	1.7	-0.2	0.2
September.....	-0.1	3.4	1.3	2.8	0.6	1.2	0.2	1.3		
November.....	-0.1	3.3	-0.7	2.1	-0.2	1.7	-0.4	1.2		

The Consumer Price Index for September 2015 is scheduled to be released on Thursday, October 15, 2015, at 8:30 a.m. (EDT).

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index for Washington-Baltimore is published bi-monthly. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 89 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers approximately 28 percent of the total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 87 urban areas across the country from about 4,000 housing units and approximately 26,000 retail establishments--department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.

The index measures price changes from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65. For further details see the CPI home page on the Internet at www.bls.gov/cpi and the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, The Consumer Price Index, available on the Internet at www.bls.gov/opub/hom/homch17_a.htm.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. **Note:Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

The **Washington-Baltimore, D.C.-Md.-Va.-W.Va., Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes the District of Columbia; Baltimore City and the counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Carroll, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, and Washington in Maryland; the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, and Manassas Park and the counties of Arlington, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, King George, Loudoun, Prince William, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren in Virginia; and the counties of Berkeley and Jefferson in West Virginia.

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Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Washington-Baltimore, D.C.-Md.-Va.-W.Va., (December 1997=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	May 2015	Jun. 2015	Jul. 2015	Jul. 2014	May 2015	Jun. 2015
All items ⁽¹⁾		155.880		155.546	0.2	-0.2	
Food and beverages ⁽¹⁾		155.349		154.613	0.7	-0.5	
Food ⁽¹⁾		156.594		155.876	0.5	-0.5	
Food at home.....		147.854	147.086	146.488	-1.0	-0.9	-0.4
Food away from home ⁽²⁾		164.999		165.118	2.3	0.1	
Alcoholic beverages ⁽²⁾		137.398		136.502	2.0	-0.7	
Housing ⁽¹⁾		166.864		168.092	2.3	0.7	
Shelter.....		178.613	179.223	179.521	3.2	0.5	0.2
Rent of primary residence ^{(1) (3)}		198.462	199.291	199.663	3.9	0.6	0.2
Owners' equivalent rent of residences ^{(3) (4)}		178.247	179.225	179.723	3.4	0.8	0.3
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence ^{(3) (4)}		178.257	179.236	179.730	3.4	0.8	0.3
Fuels and utilities.....		177.753		185.806	-0.5	4.5	
Household energy.....		168.382	175.838	175.414	-2.2	4.2	-0.2
Gas (piped) and electricity ⁽³⁾		160.999	168.700	168.187	-1.2	4.5	-0.3
Electricity ⁽³⁾		167.420	181.666	182.748	2.9	9.2	0.6
Utility (piped) gas service ⁽³⁾		123.836	113.922	109.428	-15.6	-11.6	-3.9
Household furnishings and operations.....		89.772		88.848	-1.7	-1.0	
Apparel ⁽¹⁾		97.189		86.778	-6.9	-10.7	
Transportation ⁽¹⁾		146.550		145.268	-8.0	-0.9	
Private transportation.....		142.213		143.527	-8.6	0.9	
Motor fuel.....		224.802	235.867	234.385	-24.1	4.3	-0.6
Gasoline (all types).....		224.447	235.593	234.136	-24.1	4.3	-0.6
Gasoline, unleaded regular ⁽⁵⁾		225.339	236.632	235.028	-24.7	4.3	-0.7
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade ⁽⁵⁾		228.866	239.360	238.505	-22.6	4.2	-0.4

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Washington-Baltimore, D.C.-Md.-Va.-W.Va., (December 1997=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	May 2015	Jun. 2015	Jul. 2015	Jul. 2014	May 2015	Jun. 2015
Gasoline, unleaded premium ⁽⁵⁾		233.323	244.603	244.594	-21.2	4.8	0.0
Medical care ⁽¹⁾		180.135		179.413	5.0	-0.4	
Recreation		119.188		118.484	0.8	-0.6	
Education and communication		148.198		149.394	2.2	0.8	
Other goods and services ⁽¹⁾		178.352		178.687	-1.4	0.2	
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		127.808		126.252	-4.3	-1.2	
Commodities less food and beverages		112.658		110.679	-7.7	-1.8	
Nondurables less food and beverages		141.842		138.923	-10.4	-2.1	
Durables		81.423		80.379	-3.1	-1.3	
Services		174.701		175.229	2.7	0.3	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter		144.564		143.646	-1.5	-0.6	
All items less medical care ⁽¹⁾		154.346		154.037	-0.2	-0.2	
Commodities less food		113.812		111.881	-7.2	-1.7	
Nondurables		148.161		146.385	-4.7	-1.2	
Nondurables less food		141.524		138.782	-9.4	-1.9	
Services less rent of shelter		171.082		171.155	2.0	0.0	
Services less medical care services		174.143		174.810	2.4	0.4	
Energy ⁽¹⁾		191.973	200.944	200.072	-14.4	4.2	-0.4
All items less energy		152.368		151.568	1.5	-0.5	

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Washington-Baltimore, D.C.-Md.-Va.-W.Va., (December 1997=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	May 2015	Jun. 2015	Jul. 2015	Jul. 2014	May 2015	Jun. 2015
All items less food and energy ⁽¹⁾		152.656		151.838	1.6	-0.5	

(1) Indexes on a November 1996=100 base.

(2) Indexes on a November 1997=100 base.

(3) This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series were calculated using a geometric means estimator.

(4) This index series underwent a change in composition in January 2010. The expenditure class now includes weight from secondary residences, and has been re-titled "Owners' equivalent rent of residences." The item stratum "Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence" excludes secondary residences.

(5) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

Note: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.